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Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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"And if he were forced to deliver his opinion again, touching the shadows aforesaid, and to enter the lists against those who had always been prisoners, while his sight continued dim, and his eyes unsteady—and if this process of initiation lasted a considerable time—would he not be made a laughing-stock, and would it not be said of him, that he had gone up only to come back again with his eyesight destroyed, and that it was not worth while even to attempt the ascent? And if anyone endeavoured to set them free and carry them to the light, would they not go so far as to put him to death, if they could only manage to get him into their power?"

"Yes, that they would."

Plato, we see, is sceptical as to the practical success of his ideal. The world in his sight is very evil: it will need a Divine Providence to bring about the requisite reform; but in the meantime, the philosopher who, like Socrates, Plato's master, makes the attempt, will be put to death for his pains.

But this is no argument against the validity of the ideal: if the ideal cannot be realized in the world, it is the fault of the world, not of the ideal.

So he concludes the dialogue in allegorical form, it is true, but with a clear conviction that the perfect life, if unrealizable on earth, will be realized somehow and somewhere beyond the grave. Plato knew well that his passionate belief in the immortality of the soul was but coldly and ineffectively presented in the formal proofs of philosophy: and further, as is his wont when speaking of matters that transcend human reason, he closes with a fable.

The lesson that he teaches in the tale of Er and throughout the whole of the *Republic*, is this: That as education is an education of the whole soul of man, it is not bounded by a few years of childhood and youth, but is co-extensive with the whole course of earthly life. Nay, more, it is but a preparation of the soul for the attainment of perfect knowledge in another world.

ON FATHERS—BY ONE OF THEM.*

BY THE REV. H. S. SWITHINBANK.

Gobbo—Alack, sir, I am sand-blind, I know you not.

Launcelot—It is a wise father that knows his own child.

"WHEN I grow up, I won't marry," sobbed a little voice, "I'll be a *loving father*."

He was smarting under his mother's hand, this nursery misogynist. Women were a plain mistake, specially mothers. A father's ways were more congenial.

That is from real life, and it is typical. Our young friend quite honestly thought his father more "loving." But why? For all I know, his father was all that a father should be, and so with the mother. But there are households in which those words would be a terribly true indictment of one parent, perhaps of both, "I won't marry: I'll be a loving father."

An indictment, but of which parent? Too often, alas, of the father: in that word "loving," so applied to him, lies a world of unconscious irony. Poor mothers, with the heritage of Eve, in sorrow seeking what in sorrow you brought forth! That heritage has made your yoke heavy, and we fathers add to your yoke. The burden of child-training we leave to you; women are naturally conscientious, and, with both parents' work to do, you get anxious and overdo your part, and on your hearts is laid the result of our neglect—in sorrow seeking what in sorrow you have brought forth. The father may deem himself incompetent, or fancy he is too busy, or in some other way shirk his part: he abdicates or lives as *en roi fainéant*. But responsibility abides: in such things none can fill another's place or do another's work, not even the "standing or professional parent" under whom we place our children at school.

Much has been thought and said and written about motherhood. About fatherhood one has heard too little; yet, surely it has its own special opportunities, its own

* Paper written for the Dulwich Branch of the P.N.E.U.

peculiar grace and glory, none of which can be neglected except to our own and others' infinite loss. In current books upon child-training and home-education why is so little laid upon the fathers? When the author is a woman, she naturally shrinks from taking us to task. In other works, like Lyttleton's *Mothers and Sons*, or Layard's *Religion in Boyhood*, the object is directly and immediately practical: the writers deal with English homes to make the best of them—as they are. The mothers are more easily got at, and their influence is stronger: you reach the rising generation more speedily through them—as things are. But things are not as they ought to be, as they yet may be. What tells in the long run is principle rather than practice; not merely making the best of the present, but setting up an ideal for the future.

Where, then, are we to look for our ideal, what is the model place of training? Where would our boys and girls be brought up if things were as they ought to be? Not in the school, but in the home. That was God's appointment at the first. No need to prove that now. Mind, we are dealing with the best possible, not the best practicable. We want to get at principles, with a view to improving our practice. Home, then, is the natural sphere for education: school comes in to supply our deficiencies, mental and moral; we admit that when we style the schoolmaster as *in loco parentis*. That being so, every single element of the home has its proper place and work, the first essential being motherhood and fatherhood. Not the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man. Normally, the child has both, for both are needed: each contributes to the training something that the other cannot supply. Be the mother ever so strong in will and power, she cannot father her children, nor, be he ever so mother-like, can the father mother them.

Whither shall we turn to find the elements of fatherhood, the expansion of the word *Father*? Most simply, and at the same time most deeply, in that "Voice of the Children in the Home" we call the Lord's Prayer. Taking S. Luke's version (R.V.) which gives the Prayer in outline, we see the elements of the home opening out from the first word, which is itself the Cry or Voice,—FATHER. They can be

counted on one hand, two filial and three paternal. Two bear indirectly upon the father, what he is to expect and to get from his children, viz., *Honour and Obedience*; three directly, what is due from him to them, viz., *Support, Forbearance, and Protection*.*

Honour.—"If I be a father, where is mine honour?" To deserve and to win his children's honour is assuredly the prime ambition of a father as such. And I take it that he will do this most surely by chivalrous loyalty to the mother, not varying with varying moods; and, next, by shewing honour to them, in their individuality—*maxima debetur puero reverentia*. In fact the Fifth Commandment applies all round.

And, if there is first honour from parent to child, there can be no "spoiling." A child is not a plaything given for one's amusement. God has ways of teaching that lesson to hearts that have not learnt it, ways that seem to them hard. Think what we do ourselves, when some delicate piece of mechanism is treated as a toy in the nursery. We take it away. There are things more delicate and more precious than any human handiwork; and when I hear of parents or grandparents knowingly spoiling any of Christ's little ones, I wonder they have the face to say they *love* them. Who loves the thing he bids fair to destroy?

Yes, the principle of honour applies all round—"those that honour me, them will I honour." And need one add that a father will win his children's honour not for what he seems, but for what in inward reality he is? It is no use trying to live two lives: your young people may tolerate you, may be grateful and affectionate, but honour you they will not unless deep down you have what their instinct recognizes as worthy of a child's honour.

Obedience.—Some fathers will say, "Certainly I do not spoil my children. I am master in my own house, and I *make* them obey me." But here comes in a difference that is vital. You have to deal in each case with a soul—not a thing, however beautiful; with a soul—not a mechanism, however

* Based on Part IV. of the Cambridge Press Manual, *The Church Catechism Explained* (2s.), the value of which, as a help to plain thinking on religious matters, and as an aid to parents and teachers, can hardly be overstated. No wonder that reprint after reprint has been called for.

delicate. And that which makes a soul to differ from every other part of God's Creation is just this: it possesses a self-determining will. We have to train what is free. A creeper may be trained up a wall, an animal may be trained to the level of its powers; but here you have to help a soul to help itself: the will is to be trained to the power of right choice, or rather it must develop the power of a right choice under your hand. But when a man "makes" his children obey him, likely enough he is crushing the very thing that ought to be growing. No doubt obedience is good, say in an army, however it is got; but its *moral* value, in the character, depends on how far it helps the child towards making himself do that which he knows he ought to do: consciously or unconsciously he must be: co-operating with you when he obeys, must feel, however dimly, that you are helping him to do what some day he will see to be the best. Dead obedience is not sonship, but slavery. Loving obedience involves continual self-conquest: when the child conquers himself in obeying you, then the act of obedience goes to form character: he is *making himself* in more ways than one.*

Here, too, there must be loyalty to the wife. The father must see to it that there is one standard of obedience in the house, not two; that mother's word is held as sacred as his own.

And now, three elements of fatherhood that are dues direct from himself to his children. And first, *Support*. He is husband, house-band, supplying the resources of the home, helping to husband them all, and being the constant band or binding power by which it is a house that is at unity in itself. That so it may be quite impossible for the keenest-witted child to play off or pit one parent against the other; that so no appeal shall ever lie, ever be even thought of, from a mother who punishes to a father who "loves."

Then *Forbearance*—"like as a father pitieth his own children." We have not been schooled in patience like the mother. We come home from harassing work, and small things jar upon the nerves; so she does her best to keep

* Based on p. 176 (1st edition) of *Home Education*. Miss Mason goes on to show that this is the secret of the miscarrying of many a strictly brought-up child. Every effort of obedience which does not give him a sense of self-conquest helps to enslave him, and he will resent the loss of his liberty by running into licence when he can.

high spirits down. But it is not father-like, nor fair, nor kind, nor wise, to let mother act as *tampon* between us and our own offspring. Can we not remember that we were children once? Even the freshest of us forget that sometimes; and such forgetting is just the essence of old fogeydom, from which Heaven preserve us all!

And *Protection*—to defend them in all dangers, ghostly and bodily. Here we reach the most difficult and delicate of the elements of fatherhood. We would not if we could defend our young folk *from* all dangers to soul and body. But how *in* those dangers to keep them pure and true, and yet to respect their individuality as our Father has respected ours, to force nothing and yet shield the growth?

Well, first we might learn a great deal by studying what is best in the system of a great English Public School. One such I know, where a surprising amount of liberty is given to the boys: the life savours more of the University than of ordinary school life. But, combined with this, is, first, what many parents resent, frequent opportunity of going home and seeing friends from home, and, secondly, the most careful and penetrating watchfulness on the part of the masters. The father never loses sight of his boy for many weeks together, and three times a year has formal reports, shewing that these "professional parents" have made a study of his boy that might well be a model to himself; every boy has a tutor, a house-master and a form-master, who may be all different persons each viewing him on a different side, reminding one of the threefold portrait Vandyke prepared for a sculptured bust of King Charles. Yes, we natural fathers want a little more of the "professional" element in our fatherhood. Also, a certain tone that no woman, or not one in a thousand, can acquire. It is that which Terence tried to give in some of his fathers and uncles, failing through no lack of sympathy with youth, but from absence of high ideals. It is the tone that Thackeray has taught us directly, and Shakespeare indirectly. How shall I describe it? The tone most opposed to the old-fogey spirit, the tone of good-humoured yet high-minded forbearance that sits so naturally on one who has seen the world, and watched things work themselves out in human lives and character, *not forgetting his own*. I know one parent to whom, after some years of dearly-bought

experience in tutorial work with young men, Thackeray came as a revelation: he saw with Thackeray's eyes what life had failed to shew him, and bitterly did he regret he had not been set years before to study *The Virginians*, *Pendennis*, and *The Newcomes*, by way of *pädagogic*. To defend our young folk in danger we need prayer—that first and foremost; we need study—that of course; we need sympathy with their pursuits—that comes easy to us. But we also need to be *men*, with a man's broad view of life married to the high ideal and sensitive conscience of a woman. And that is what God gives to guard His children in the normal home. Unfortunately, few homes are normal or anything like it! One has heard of London clergy, whose nearest parishioners are surely they of their own household, beginning after years of "family" life to make the acquaintance of their own children. Surely, home is the first charge upon a man's spiritual energies: this ought he to do, and not leave the other undone. Fathers in business, with long hours and distant offices, are so little in the home that bread-winning comes to be considered their proper work, and child-training left to the wife—this to the loss of all concerned. To her loss, for the fair sharing of home duties is among the precious fruits of wedded love; to their loss, for God gave them two parents, and that is not one too many for their need. Yes, and to the father's loss, for his own growth is stunted, his life's training left incomplete. "What the women leave unfinished in our moral education," wrote Goethe, "the children complete in us." They react upon our characters with a spell that is nothing less than divine—

"O dearest, dearest boy! my heart
For better lore would seldom yearn,
Could I but teach the hundredth part
Of what from thee I learn."

RECKONING.

BY P. G. O'CONNELL.

PART I.

ALL writers on education are agreed as to the iniquity of attempting to teach necessary facts by rote, yet nine British schoolmasters out of ten know of no better way. If they do not teach the multiplication table by rote themselves they expect their pupils to have been so taught. To the question, "Seven times nine?" they exact an answer given with a celerity that can only spring from rote learning. The inaccuracy, which is a necessary result, pursues the boy to his dying day, and should he later become a Senior Wrangler, he will still make occasional numerical mistakes. He may invent marvels, discover wonders, but the occasional numerical inaccuracy will cling to him for life.

Gaze into a baby's eyes as he diligently counts his toes. Can you not see that he is already learning the art of reckoning? Long before he can speak he is an adept at addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. He has convinced himself by experiment of the truth of many such necessary facts as that two and three make five, that twice four are eight, and three times three nine. You may be sure he makes no mistakes. Watch and see how carefully he repeats every operation until he has thoroughly convinced himself of the truth of the particular fact he is learning. It may fairly be maintained that he knows something of the art of reckoning, and it is sad that this knowledge should be driven out of him by foolish teachers, as it almost invariably is. It may be objected that a child who has never been to school, when asked what four and five make, will perhaps answer eight. That only proves that he does not yet quite understand the words four, five and eight.

To realise his condition, imagine that you yourself, who are no doubt a correct reckoner, were cast on an island among savages whose language you did not understand. Imagine that for your sins they sent you to their school; that before you had thoroughly learnt their outlandish names for